

Commission on Victims in the Courts (COVIC) Update and Accomplishments

AJC Meeting – June 19, 2017

2015 Distinguished Service Award Recipients

Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich Recognizes Distinguished Service during National Crime Victims' Rights Week

PUBLIC POLICY: *ARIZONA SUPREME COURT COMMISSION ON VICTIMS IN THE COURT (COVIC), ARIZONA SUPREME COURT*

Recognizing that victims' constitutional rights should be applied uniformly throughout the state, the Arizona Supreme Court's Commission on Victims in the Court (COVIC) was established in March 2006 to better address this need. COVIC has a broad and balanced membership, which includes judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, victims, victim advocates, probation officers, a forensic nurse, law enforcement and public members working together to improve the treatment of crime victims. Its members strive to ensure that all judicial officers and court staff understand the fundamentals of victims' rights and their treatment by the courts. COVIC advises the Arizona Judicial Council (AJC) by reviewing and submitting policy recommendations and procedures to improve victim access and ensure fair treatment during their involvement in the criminal justice system. Most recently, COVIC played a critical role in promoting the enhanced collection of restitution. It has also proposed and seen successful adopted changes to court rules involving victim identification privacy and the appropriate representation in dependency actions. Identifying areas of need for crime victims in the court, COVIC has been instrumental in improving processes and policies navigating through the justice system and beyond, all while maintaining the neutrality essential to the justice system. Arizona can take pride in having developed a commission that maintains neutrality while still addressing issues that directly impact victims of crime. As it stands, COVIC remains the only court-sponsored commission on victims in the country and serves as an example for court participation on victims' rights issues.



Other Accomplishments:

- Presented panel discussion on Crime Victims' Constitutional Rights in Arizona to 2015 Annual Judicial Conference with 100+ judicial officer attendees
- Provided victims' rights training sessions to the courts and other organizations
- Restitution work group helped draft proposed legislation which led to expansion of Victim Restitution laws this past session
- Restitution work group revamped AZ Supreme Court's Crime Victim Restitution webpages for ease of use
- Collaborated with CIDVC and APAAC on adopting statewide uniformity of the use of Lethality Assessments
- Collaborating with CIDVC and DOC on serving Orders of Protection in the prison system



16th ANNUAL CRIME VICTIM LAW CONFERENCE
May 11-12 | Oregon Convention Center | Portland, Oregon

**Room E146 HELPING VICTIMS WHILE MAINTAINING
BALANCE: Courts Can Make A Difference**

Hon. Ronald Reinstein, *Arizona Supreme Court*

Kirstin Flores, M.A., *Arizona Attorney General's Office*

Denise Lundin, *Arizona Supreme Court, Administrative Office of
the Courts*

The Arizona Commission on Victims in the Courts (COVIC) was established in 2006 and is the only state court-sponsored commission on victims in the country. The Chief Justice of the Arizona Supreme Court appoints its membership, which includes judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, victims, victim advocates, probation officials, a forensic nurse, law enforcement and public members. Recognizing that Arizona's Victims' Bill of Rights should be applied uniformly throughout the state, COVIC strives to ensure that all judicial officers and court personnel understand the fundamentals of victims' rights and their treatment by the courts and works to promote the enhanced collection of restitution. COVIC's work was instrumental in changes to court rules involving victim identification, privacy and media/public access and the appropriate representation of children in dependency actions. Presenters will describe the Arizona experience and how other state courts might organize their own commissions, without violating judicial conduct codes.